DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 249 338 UD 023 867

TITLE	An Urban Initiative.
INSTITUTION	New Jersey State Dept. of Education, Trenton.
PUB DATE	Mar 84
NOTE	46p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Improvement; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership; School Business Relationship; *School Community Relationship; School Effectiveness; *State Programs; *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*New Jersey; *Operation School Renewal NJ

ABSTRACT

New Jersey's urban initiative has two components. The first is a broad-based program that addresses critical issues common to most urban districts Statewide. The second is a comprehensive program (Operation School Renewal) that concentrates the State's resources in three urban districts. The concentrated initiative, Operation School Renewal, will begin its first cycle during the 1984-85 through 1986-87 school years. Additional urban districts will be included in each subsequent year. Urban districts participating in the renewal program must be willing to make the initiative a top priority and to allocate staff, energy and resources to facilitate its implementation. The School Renewal Team will work closely with three selected districts to help them plan how best to address the objectives of the concentrated initiative and to help them secure the human and fiscal resources to implement these plans. Monitoring will be the responsibility of the county offices of education, and is a key part of the State's renewed commitment to local planning for educational excellence. Another important aspect of the urban initiative is the direct involvement of the corporate and industrial sectors. Finally, the project also has important research implications for knowledge in the areas of educational leadership, school effectiveness, and the relationship between school, community, parents, and employers. (GC)

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AN URBAN INITIATIVE

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AN URBAN INITIATIVE

Executive Summary

As Governor Kean indicated in his state-of-the-state message to the legislature, "Urban education deserves our attention. And, it will get it." The New Jersey State Department of Education proposes to join with urban educators and communities in launching a campaign to improve inner city schools. From the outset, it must be recognized that no single solution, program or project can substantially alleviate all of the problems associated with urban education.

Therefore, New Jersey has designed a comprehensive, long-term effort which has two major components:

1. A broad-based assistance program for all 51 urban districts in the state that will focus on nine critical educational issues; and

2. A concentrated effort (Operation School Renewal) to improve the quality of education in three urban school districts initially and then expand to include additional districts as experience and resources permit.

Both the broad based program and the concentrated effort will complement the state's new approach to monitoring the educational programs of local school districts. Although applicable to all New Jersey districts, the monitoring process will be especially useful to high need urban districts, which initially may be unable to meet state certification standards. Monitoring yields solid data and emphasizes local accountability for educational improvement. Therefore, the monitoring process will facilitate urban district renewal by helping the district and the state to focus on local needs. The broad based and concentrated components of the initiative represent the department's commitment to work with urban communities to resolve local educational problems.

A major strategy of the urban initiative involves identifying and informing urban educators of effective programs being conducted by urban schools in New Jersey and in other states. Department personnel will research these programs and will develop dissemination and training materials related to them. Through the regional curriculum services units and a special School Renewal Team, urban districts and schools will receive assistance in adapting these practices, where appropriate, to meet local needs.

Basic Assumptions

Underlying this plan are basic assumptions that will guide its implementation:

1. The urban initiative should be based on the best that is known about improving school environments and pupil achievement.

2. No "quick fix" will suffice. School change is a long-term process, not an event. It must come from within the school itself.

3. The school is a community that is shaped by the students, staff, parents and others who feel "ownership" of the school's character. Therefore, improving the learning environment within each participating school, a prime focus of the urban initiative, is dependent on their direct and active involvement.

4. The building principal is a key to school success. This is the leader who sets the tone and clarifies the goals and expectations for the school community.

5. Standards and expectations set for disadvantaged and minority children in urban settings must be equal to those standards and expectations set for children in middle and upper middle class communities.

Part I: The Broad Based Initiative

The broad based component of the urban initiative has already begun. It has a statewide focus and addresses nine educational issues which particularly affect urban districts:

1. Improving the reading and mathematics skills of low-achieving seventh and eighth grade students in urban districts;

2. Improving writing instruction in elementary and secondary schools;

3. Increasing employment opportunities for vocational education students;

4. Improving and expanding special education options for the secondary school population;

5. Enabling compensatory and bilingual secondary students to fulfill high school graduation requirements;

6. Developing sound disciplinary practices, policies and educational alternatives for disruptive students;

7. Establishing and continuing programs for the prevention and treatment of drug and alcohol abuse in the schools;

8. Enabling young dropouts to earn a high school diploma; and

9. Fostering computer literacy and expanding instructional uses of computers.

The New Jersey Department of Education has researched the background, determined the objectives, established specific activities to meet these objectives, and designed ways to evaluate the achievement of each objective.

Although the department identifies 51 districts as "urban," these communities run the gamut from larger cities to suburban towns with economically distressed older sections. It is not expected that the urban initiative will involve or affect all urban districts to the same extent or at the

same time. From the array of training and materials to be offered through the broad based program, some urban communities may select one or two aspects to augment their continuing improvement efforts. Others may participate extensively and a few may at first choose to decline such services altogether. Thus, evaluation of the broad based urban initiative's impact will be in terms of those districts actively participating in the training and then implementing strategies to achieve the objectives outlined for one or more critical issues.

Part II: Operation School Renewal -- A Concentrated Approach

The second part of the urban initiative -- "Operation School Renewal," is designed to improve the quality of education in three selected urban school districts. Currently in the planning stages, it will deal directly with several areas identified by the Commissioner of Education's Urban Education Advisory Committee as "symptomatic of urban districts' problems." The objectives established for addressing these problems represent a firm commitment by the department to help selected urban districts achieve the following measurable though difficult goals:

1. to improve pupil attendance in each project school to the statewide average of 92 percent;

2. to raise pupil performance in mathematics, reading and writing to state standards;

3. to increase the effectiveness of building principals in participating schools;

4. to reduce the reported incidence of disruptive behavior of pupils by 40 percent; and

5. to reduce youth unemployment through vocational education.

Although the concentrated initiative will focus on assisting only three urban districts initially because of limited staff and resources, Operation School Renewal will be expanded to other districts, and the lessons learned will be shared on an ongoing basis with interested communities throughout the state.

Selection Criteria and Process for Operation School Renewal

Districts that wish to become involved in this three-year improvement program: must demonstrate high need; must have an existing code of student conduct and a written discipline policy; must genuinely want to participate; and must express that commitment through a written application. As part of a written agreement, the local school board must acknowledge that the initiative is a top priority to which it is willing to commit district financial and staff resources over an extended period of time. Participating urban districts must also agree to work collaboratively for a minimum of three years with the department's School Renewal Team.

A Selection Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the Commissioner's Urban Education Advisory Committee, major educational organizations, corporate executives and department senior managers will be established to review and advise the commissioner on which three of the self-nominated districts should be selected for initial participation in the Operation School Renewal project. The three districts will be identified by June 1984.

School Renewal Team... An Integral Part of the Process

The School Renewal (or special resource) Team will be an integral part of the concentrated urban effort. The team will be headed by the Assistant Commissioner of Educational Programs, Dr. Arnold Webb. This team will be responsible for providing the human and fiscal resources that will support the activities to which each of the participating urban districts are committed over the next three years.

In addition to Dr. Webb, the team's core will consist of a full-time project manager and five division heads who work directly with participating districts. Each district will provide a local liaison person to work full-time as a member of the School Renewal Team. Augmenting this core team will be a flexible cadre of department staff, higher education faculty, business and industry advisors and other experts, as needed.

Team members will be selected for their knowledge and experience in such areas as: urban education, research and evaluation, curriculum and instruction, and management. Working closely with local district educational leaders, the team will help design a comprehensive, three-year plan of action to address the five objectives that comprise the concentrated initiative.

The School Renewal Team will draw upon a number of resources to assist the three selected districts. These may include, but are not limited to, federal and state discretionary funds, a special state allocation for the urban initiative, matching funds from private foundations, and corporate resources.

Working on-site in the districts and using the three regional curriculum services units (RCSUs) as home bases will foster communication between the School Renewal Team, the RCSUs and the urban districts. This, in turn, will help the department to better coordinate its curriculum delivery system to urban districts.

In short, the School Renewal Team is the cornerstone of the Department of Education's concentrated urban initiative.

Business and Industry Involvement

To support both the broad based and concentrated components of the urban initiative, the department is currently promoting increased corporate and industrial involvement in the schools in such areas as: management/staff training; staff exchanges; development of work-study programs and increased employment opportunities; equipment contributions and various types of consultative services.

Since New Jersey business and industry are the prime recipients of the products of the state's public schools, a compelling case can be made for corporate leaders to invest time, energy and resources in this effort. Their impact can be most significant when working with the three districts selected for the concentrated component. As members of the School Renewal Team, corporate leaders can help shape districts' long-range improvement plans as well as participate directly in their implementation. Therefore, in the initial phases of the urban initiative the department is seeking people resources. At later stages the corporate sector may be asked to provide fiscal resources to expand the renewal effort.

Summary

New Jersey's urban initiative has two components. The first is a broad based program that addresses nine critical issues common to most urban districts statewide, and the second is a comprehensive program that concentrates the state's resources in three urban districts (Operation School Renewal). Both components are designed to complement the new state monitoring process.

The concentrated initiative--Operation School Renewal--will begin its first cycle during the 1984-85 through 1986-87 school years. Additional urban districts will be included in each subsequent year. Urban districts participating in the renewal program must be willing to make the initiative a top priority and to allocate staff, energy and resources to its implementation.

The School Renewal Team will work closely with three selected districts to help them plan how best to address the five objectives of the concentrated initiative and to help them secure the human and fiscal resources to implement these plans.

The initiative holds great promise of being able to effect visible and meaningful change in urban education. Commitment, tenacity, patience and follow-through must be the bywords of both the districts and the department if that promise is to be fulfilled.

AN URBAN INITIATIVE

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March 1984

PTM #300.95

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AN URBAN INITIATIVE

I. INTRODUCTION

This document describes a major initiative of the New Jersey Department of Education in collaboration with urban school districts and schools throughout the state. This urban initiative represents a large scale, long-term, multi-faceted attack on the problems associated with inner city education. As Governor Kean indicated in his recent State of the State speech:

> "This will be an ambitious proposal, because I believe that we must face directly the problems of urban schools. There are models of successful urban programs around the country, lessons which we can apply here in New Jersey. The point is that urban education deserves our attention. And it will get it."

The purpose of this document is to describe the overall plan for the initiative. Some elements are still in the planning stage. Detailed design specifications have been developed for other aspects. Still other parts of the initiative have moved beyond the planning and design stages and are in operation.

The central role to be played by the cooperating urban school districts and schools needs to be emphasized at the outset. The State Department of Education has several important responsibilities including organizing the statewide initiative, providing human and fiscal resources to support local improvement efforts, and implementing a monitoring system. The ultimate success of the project, however, will depend heavily on the involvement and commitment of participating school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

The immediate focus of this initiative is to deal directly with the major problem areas in urban districts, through specific measurable objectives. Nevertheless, the department is aware of the fact that many urban schools in this and other states have already demonstrated the desire and the capability to effect positive educational change. In fact, given the necessary support and assistance, many urban schools in New Jersey are both ready and able to reach for excellence in education.

This urban initiative does not address the problem of school facilities. Many inner cities must contend with old and deteriorating physical plants. Analyses of the capital needs of urban districts have been completed both by the state and by the districts themselves. However, the sheer fiscal magnitude of the problem requires a long-range solution supported by both the executive and legislative branches of state government.

Obviously, there is no single solution or project that can solve or substantially alleviate the plight of urban education. The problems of inner city education must be attacked on several fronts. Therefore, a two-pronged urban initiative is being proposed. It is designed to provide support to a broad based urban constituency across the state and to launch a coordinated effort to further improve the educational programs of three urban districts.

The first part of this effort (a broad based approach) has already begun with the identification by the Department of Education of nine statewide critical issues which particularly affect urban districts.

These issues are:

1. Improving the reading and mathematics skills of low-achieving seventh and eighth grade students in urban districts;

2. Improving writing instruction in elementary and secondary schools;

3. Increasing employment opportunities for vocational education students;

4. Improving and expanding special education options for the secondary school population;

5. Enabling compensatory and bilingual secondary students to fulfill high school graduation requirements;

6. Developing sound disciplinary practices, policies and educational alternatives for disruptive students;

7. Establishing and continuing programs for the prevention and treatment of drug and alcohol abuse in the schools;

8. Enabling young dropouts to earn a high school diploma; and

9. Fostering computer literacy and expanding instructional uses of computers.

Specific objectives and evaluative measures for each of the above critical issues are detailed in Section III. Activities related to each of the objectives are currently being implemented.

The second component of the Department's urban initiative, "Operation School Renewal," will involve a concentration of resources in the implementation of comprehensive programs over a three-year time period in selected schools within three urban districts. Districts chosen must be willing to make their own commitments of energy and resources. It will be essential to the eventual success of the initiative that the number of initial districts participating be strictly limited, so that adequate department staff and resources can be made available to assure the highest quality assistance.

The specific objectives of the concentrated initiative (Operation School Renewal) are:

1. to improve pupil attendance in each project school to the statewide average of 92 percent;

2. to raise pupil performance in mathematics, reading, and writing to state standards;

3. to increase the effectiveness of building principals in participating schools;

4. to reduce the reported incidence of disruptive behavior of pupils by 40 percent; and

5. to reduce youth unemployment through vocational education.

Section IV details specific activities and evaluative measures related to the above objectives.

The urban initiative, including both the broad based and concentrated components, is related to the department's revised monitoring process. Between January 1984 and December 1985, all districts in New Jersey will have been monitored. The process focuses on the essential elements for a thorough and efficient education as identified by the state. These elements will be evaluated objectively and consistently throughout the state. The monitoring process thereby assures the accountability of all districts.

Districts which demonstrate satisfactory performance in the essential elements will receive five-year certification and will not be monitored during that time span. Consequently, the department will be able to direct additional resources to assist districts not granted certification.

A more detailed explanation of the linkage between the urban initiative and the monitoring process is provided in Section V.

II. GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS

Continuing progress in the urban districts and schools of New Jersey should be guided by the best that is known about improving educational environments and achievement. The following are the assumptions which the department expects to guide its major initiative.

There is no "quick fix" approach to improvement; school change is a process not an event. The process, however, is not an end in itself and must be viewed as a means toward the achievement of specific objectives. For significant and lasting improvement in a school, the time frame should be from 3-5 years. Therefore, a statewide improvement in urban schools should be evaluated in terms of specific objectives over an extended period of time.

No design for improvement can work without the direct and active involvement of students, staff, parents, and members of the individual school community. This may require of educational leaders new communication and problem solving skills. However, the principal is the single most important determinant of the extent to which a school can be "successful." He/she sets the tone and clarifies goals and expectations for the school community. Investment of resources in further strengthening the building level manager will significantly enhance a school's renewal efforts.

The school is a community which is influenced by but not totally dependent on its external environment for its character. School improvement comes from within, beginning at the core with the students, the teachers, the school administrators and the educational program. Outside elements can support, stimulate, and enhance school improvement, but cannot achieve it by themselves.

Improving the quality of the learning environment within each school building must be a prime focus of the initiative. Students will respond positively to expectations for improvement if they feel "ownership" of the school and are comfortable in it. A school climate that is safe and orderly, as well as supportive and stimulating, will motivate students to care about themselves and their school.

Standards and expectations set for minority and disadvantaged students must be equal to those set for middle and upper middle class students. Therefore, any perception that there is a direct and immutable correlation between ethnicity and achievement must be dismissed.

III. THE BROAD BASED INITIATIVE: CRITICAL ISSUES

This section describes current department activities intended to assist urban schools statewide in their educational planning and improvement efforts. According to criteria used by the Division of Finance in the Department of Education, 51 districts are categorized as urban. The criteria include population density per square mile, equalized valuation per capita, equalized tax rates, the number of public housing units, and the number of people living in public housing. However, these communities so classified run the gamut from large inner cities to suburban towns whose older sections are economically distressed. It is not expected that the broad based urban initiative will involve or affect all urban districts to the same extent, or at the same time.

Some urban districts are already successfully implementing local improvement programs to move beyond minimums toward excellence. From the array of services and materials offered through the broad based component, these communities may select one or two which can augment their ongoing efforts. Other communities will participate extensively in department programs related to many of the nine critical issues. Such participation will be integrated by the district into a long-range action plan for educational improvement. However, some urban districts may initially decline to avail themselves of the services provided through the department's broad based initiative. Thus, a meaningful evaluation of the broad based initiative's impact must be limited to the specific districts which actually participate and then implement strategies to achieve the objectives related to each critical issue.

Department staff began identifying critical issues for all districts in the late spring of 1983. The process of review, modification and expansion into action plans and strategies took place during the summer. In early September, Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman approved 15 critical issues as department priorities. Nine of these issues are particularly relevant to the needs of urban districts and became central to the urban initiative (listed on page 3). They are described in this section along with specific objectives and evaluative measures.

It is important to note that the issues identified and selected by the department are generally congruent with those which have emerged from the local district planning processes.

ISSUE 1: IMPROVING THE READING AND MATHEMATICS SKILLS OF LOW-ACHIEVING SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS IN URBAN DISTRICTS.

BACKGROUND:

Many urban students' proficiencies in reading and mathematics are currently below state standards. If curriculum and instruction are not improved, particularly at the seventh and eighth grade levels, large numbers of students will likely fail the new ninth grade basic skills test.

OBJECTIVE:

To improve the reading and mathematics proficiencies of seventh and eighth grade students in those schools whose staff receive training in instructional improvement models so that 75 percent will pass the ninth grade basic skills test.

ACTIVITIES:

Instructional models to improve academic performance in the basic skills for low-achieving seventh and eighth grade students are being developed and will be piloted initially in selected urban districts. The models will be accompanied by staff development activities in the participating schools. Specifically, training will be provided in approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics and in methods of increasing test performance by reducing student anxiety.

The instructional models will consist of three components. The first will be a research-based resource guide that provides examples of various instructional strategies for developing reading skills. Sample lesson plans that address such skills as inferential comprehension and interpreting figurative language will be a major portion of the guide. The resource guide will be field tested in the spring of 1984 and revised for dissemination in 1984-85. The second will be a one-hour videotape and accompanying teacher's manual designed to equip teachers of students in grades 7-9 with specific approaches for teaching mathematical reasoning and problem solving. The topics to be covered include computation of percentage, decimals, and fractions as well as techniques for teaching estimation. Teaching strategies will begin with concrete terms and examples and build step-by-step to abstract reasoning. Teachers in adopting school districts will receive training in the use of both models. The third component will be a teachers' resource guide for increasing student test skills through reducing pupil anxiety about tests and increasing their motivation to take tests seriously. The guide will provide information on the most common errors students make in approaching tests and will illustrate how teacher made tests can be used both to improve instruction and to prepare students for standardized tests, including the state test.

EVALUATION:

After receiving two years of instruction in grades 7 and 8, consistant with the department's instructional models to improve academic performance in reading and mathematics, 75 percent of low-achieving students in the pilot programs will improve sufficiently to pass the state ninth grade basic skills test in reading and mathematics.

ISSUE 2: IMPROVING WRITING INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

BACKGROUND:

There is nationwide concern over the decline in the quality of students' writing skills. The National Academy of Education Committee on Basic Skills and Testing (1978) has cited evidence of a decrease in classroom time spent on teaching writing and confusion about the appropriate methods of instruction. Many K-12 teachers have had little or no formal training in the teaching of writing.

In New Jersey, the problem is receiving considerable attention. Effective 1985-86, students must pass a state writing test as a prerequisite for high school graduation. The results of the 1983 Statewide Writing Test demonstrated the need for improved instruction in this skill.

Several documents have been developed by the department to assist local districts in preparing their students for the writing test and in using the results of the testing. The Skill Arrays for the New Statewide Testing System provides information districts can use in planning their curricula. The New Jersey Statewide Writing Assessment Program: Staff Development Guide and Reference Handbook can be used either as an information source on writing assessment or as the basis of staff development activities at the local level.

Educational researchers have begun to identify the ingredients of effective writing programs. They have noted that successful writing programs give school-wide attention to writing, establish writing standards that are understood by both school faculty, students, and parents and employ teachers who themselves write and read their writing to students. Strategies and proven practices based on this and other research are being made available to local districts by the department.

OBJECTIVE:

To improve student performance in writing so that at least 75 percent will pass the written portion of the New Jersey state test after one full year of instruction in schools which implement the identified strategies for instruction and assessment.

ACTIVITIES:

Local districts are being offered training in several writing instructional models and may choose from these in-service opportunities the model(s) appropriate for their writing program. To date, several models have been selected and regional in-service sessions are being provided through the regional curriculum services units. In addition to presenting instructional strategies, the sessions also include assistance with understanding and using such scoring techniques as holistic and primary trait assessment. These activities are intended to assist districts in improving the performance of students in kindergarten through grade twelve.

General assistance and information are being provided by the department's county offices, regional curriculum services units and, where appropriate, central office staff. Technical assistance to particular districts will be delivered by the regional curriculum services units as follow-up to districts' participation in the in-service sessions. This in-service effort will have a significant impact in urban districts and should affect approximately 20,000 students. During 1983-84, at least 200 supervisors and teachers will be trained in approaches to improve writing instruction and assessment. By 1986, at least 1,000 supervisors and teachers will have been trained. Throughout these activities urban districts' needs will receive particular attention.

EVALUATION:

After one full year of instruction in a school which implements the identified strategies for instruction and assessment, 75 percent of the students will pass the writing portion of the New Jersey state test.

ISSUE 3: INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.

BACKGROUND:

The unemployment rate for the 16 to 19-year-old age group in New Jersey has increased over the last four years from 18.9 percent in 1979 to 22.6 percent in 1983. A comparison with national data indicates that New Jersey's unemployment rate is increasing, although less rapidly than the national rate. The same data indicate that unemployment among 16 to 19-year-olds has been increasing even more dramatically. In addition, corresponding unemployment rates for youth and adults in urban areas are even higher than New Jersey averages.

The New Jersey Department of Labor indicates in its Annual Vocational Education Occupations Supply/Demand Report that the total statewide demand for employees in the traditional vocational education program areas in 1981 was twice the available supply.

It appears that many of New Jersey's unemployed citizens, including youth, are untrained or inappropriately trained to enter occupations that are in demand. A need exists for students, especially in urban schools, to relate what is learned in school to obtaining a job.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the number of students placed in jobs through cooperative vocational education programs in 1984-85 by 10 percent over the 1983-84 total; and

2. To increase by 10 percent the number of students who make a successful transition from vocational education programs to registered apprenticeship programs between 1984-85 and 1986-87.

ACTIVITIES:

The department's Division of Vocational Education will develop a comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of urban students and employers. Division staff will work with local school personnel to modify vocational and pre-vocational programs and, where necessary, to develop new programs to ensure that training will prepare students for employment. Activities implemented in conjunction with business and industry will focus on expanding the availability of apprenticeships and cooperative vocational education.

Vocational guidance and counseling (K-adult) activities include ensuring that each high school will have a job placement counselor and a job developer on staff. Career resource centers will also be established in each high school. In addition, a series of pre-vocational assessment tests and counseling sessions will be established for cooperative vocational education applicants and for potential school dropouts. Finally, between 1984-85 and 1986-87 all counselors will receive two weeks of training and continuous updating on topics ranging from an introduction to career education to placement in apprenticeship programs.

For the pre-vocational (K-8/9) area, department staff will work with local planners to develop plans for implementing K-9 sequential career awareness/ development programs. Department staff will also arrange for training of local leaders and trainers and will assist in arranging for local staff training. Furthermore, the department's vocational education staff in conjunction with county office and RCSU personnel will provide technical assistance for local leaders, and assist them in evaluating local program effectiveness.

With regard to occupational program (9-adult) activities, program area specialists will help establish local urban industry/school councils to provide initial direction in establishing the needs of business and industry. Specialists will also conduct an occupational needs analysis of the employing community. Assistance will be provided in developing or modifying programs to address the needs of business and industry. In addition, recruitment and job placement activities will be strengthened. The department will aid in conducting follow-up studies of students who have completed or dropped out of vocational education programs. Occupational specialists will also provide assistance for in-service in such areas as:

- cooperative vocational education (regular and special programs)
- apprenticeship training
- curriculum development and modification (including the incorporation of basic skills learning activities)

Finally, through discretionary federal vocational education funds, schools will be provided with equipment necessary to train students in such fields as photo-engraving, electronics, robotics and data processing.

EVALUATION:

1. The number of students placed in jobs through cooperative vocational education programs by 1984-85 will be 10 percent greater than the 1983-84 total as measured by the Division of Vocational Education's annual report to the federal government.

2. The number of students who make a successful transition from vocational education programs to registered apprenticeship programs by 1986-87 will be 10 percent greater than the 1984-85 total as measured by the Division of Vocational Education's annual report to the federal government.

ISSUE 4: IMPROVING AND EXPANDING SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOL POPULATION.

BACKGROUND:

The total number of educationally handicapped pupils in secondary urban schools is approximately 21,000. Since education for most of these students will terminate when they complete high school, the most viable program option would be a vocational/special education program. However, in many parts of the state, vocational/special education programs are limited or, where programs are available, there are limited numbers of openings for handicapped students.

Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 secondary school students (grades 7-12) in urban districts are classified as either emotionally disturbed or as socially maladjusted. Program offerings for these students are especially limited. In many cases, the only program option is placement in a private school for the handicapped. Many of these students need alternative educational programs and a much broader array of educational options including vocational training. Generally, public schools have not provided the range of program options necessary to meet the needs of students with behavioral or emotional problems.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase urban handicapped students' participation in vocational/special education programs 20 percent between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

2. To increase the employment rate for handicapped urban students who have completed vocational/special education programs 15 percent between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

3. To increase the number of secondary level program offerings in urban schools for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted students 20 percent between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

4. To decrease the dropout rate for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted secondary students in urban schools 15 percent between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

5. To increase the basic skills achievement level of urban pupils in specially funded secondary special education programs by 10 NCEs (normal curve equivalents) between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

ACTIVITIES:

The department's Division of Special Education will identify and facilitate the establishment of a broader range of program offerings for secondary educationally handicapped students in New Jersey's local school districts. To assist local districts in this effort the division will determine existing programs, practices and needs regarding secondary educationally handicapped students. It will also identify programs and practices that have demonstrated evidence of or potential for effectiveness with secondary educationally handicapped students. Particular emphasis will be placed on those that focus on the emotionally disturbed/socially maladjusted populations and on those that involve vocational education. Information on effective practices or model programs for educationally handicapped students will be

disseminated throughout the year. Also, the division will help local school districts adopt, develop and implement effective programs and practices for the secondary educationally handicapped populations.

The Division of Special Education will focus its efforts on high need urban districts. Secondary special education has been designated as a funding priority for P.L. 94-142 discretionary/support grants. Specific target areas will include vocational/special education and programs and services for disruptive secondary school youth who are classified as emotionally disturbed or as socially maladjusted.

The division has also developed proposed administrative code (rules and regulations) to provide a comprehensive structure that addresses the programmatic needs of the secondary school population. This code is scheduled to be adopted by the State Board of Education in June, 1984.

EVALUATION:

1. Urban handicapped students' participation in vocational/special education programs will increase by 20 percent as measured by a Division of Special Education survey which will be administered annually between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

2. The employment rate for handicapped urban students who have completed vocational/special education programs will increase 15 percent as measured by a Division of Special Education survey administered annually between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

3. The number of secondary level program offerings in urban schools for emotionally disturbed and for socially maladjusted students will increase 20 percent as measured by a Division of Special Education survey administered annually between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

4. The dropout rate for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted secondary students in urban schools will decrease by 15 percent as measured by an annual Division of Special Education survey administered between 1983-84 and 1986-87.

5. The basic skills achievement level of urban pupils in specially funded secondary special education programs will increase by 10 NCEs (normal curve equivalents) between 1983-84 and 1986-87 as measured by department approved standardized basic skills tests appropriate to the students' handicaps.

ISSUE 5: ENABLING COMPENSATORY AND BILINGUAL SECONDARY STUDENTS TO FULFILL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

BACKGROUND:

By 1985-86 a more rigorous basic skills test will be used as part of the state high school graduation requirements. However, on the spring 1983 Minimum Basic Skills Test, 10,044 (30.56 percent) and 8,474 (26.59 percent) of the ninth and tenth grade students in 51 urban districts scored below state standards. Therefore, to prepare urban secondary pupils to meet future graduation requirements, the effectiveness of the basic skills instructional programs in their schools must be improved.

Moreover 6,000 limited English proficient students have been identified at the secondary level. Of this number, over 50 percent require remedial services. The vast majority of these students are enrolled in urban schools. There are few secondary level remedial programs for limited English proficient students. Districts vary widely in their abilities to diagnose and to meet the needs of these students.

OBJECTIVE:

To increase by 20 percent between 1984-85 and 1987-88 the number of compensatory and bilingual students who graduate from high school.

ACTIVITIES:

Two major approaches will be utilized to accomplish this objective. As part of the first thrust, an already identified exemplary school/instructional improvement model, the Achievement Directed Leadership (ADL) Project, will be implemented initially in a minimum of five urban districts. Department staff will provide support for the implementation and evaluation of the project in participating districts. The pilot programs will be used to stimulate interest and to encourage replications in other urban districts.

For the second thrust, the department's Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education will identify effective secondary basic skills and bilingual programs as well as managerial and instructional strategies. The division will collect this information from districts in New Jersey and neighboring states. Programs and strategies that meet the criteria of effectiveness will be described within a compendium to be disseminated to all secondary schools in New Jersey by November 1984. By January 1985, State Department of Education staff at RCSUs and county offices will be trained to assist urban districts in implementing the identified effective secondary school practices.

EVALUATION

The senior class of 1987-88, in those districts that implement newly identified exemplary secondary basic skills programs/strategies, will show a 20 percent increase over the senior class of 1984-85 in the rate of graduation for compensatory and bilingual students.

ISSUE 6: DEVELOPING SOUND DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES, POLICIES, AND EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES FOR DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS.

BACKGROUND:

Disruption in the schools is a serious concern of educators, students, and the public in New Jersey and throughout the nation. The annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward Public Schools (Phi Delta Kappan magazine) has shown that discipline is perceived by the public as one of the most important problems facing public schools. Therefore, models for alternative education programs for disruptive students will be identified and pilot programs will be implemented in districts with significant numbers of disruptive youth. Research findings provide strong indicators that changes in the school organizational structure reduce the incidence of violence and vandalism and that alternative programs can effectively address the problems of disruptive youth. (Violent Schools - Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress of the United States, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978.) In 1980, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution that encourages each district board of education without a written disciplinary policy to develop one, including a code of conduct for students.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To reduce the number of delinquent acts committed in participating schools by 20 percent after one full year of implementing pilot programs for disruptive pupils, as compared with the pre-program year.

2. To reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions in participating schools by 20 percent after one full year of implementing pilot programs for disruptive pupils, as compared with the pre-program year.

ACTIVITIES:

During 1984-85, school districts will receive training and assistance through the RCSUs in issues related to classroom discipline and school management. These school and classroom management strategies are intended to help principals and teachers recognize adult behaviors that contribute to appropriate student behavior in the classroom. All school districts will be provided with a resource guide that includes models for developing sound disciplinary practices, policies, and successful educational alternatives for disruptive youth.

School staff will receive assistance from RCSU and county office staff in identifying and implementing alternative programs appropriate to their needs. With department assistance, five schools will implement alternative education programs for disruptive youth each year between 1984-85 and 1986-87. They will receive assistance from department staff in improving their policies and practices, communicating this information to students and parents, and ensuring that students' rights and responsibilities are clear and that due process procedures are followed.

EVALUATION:

1. One full year after implementing pilot programs for disruptive pupils, participating schools will show a 20 percent decrease in the incidence of delinquent acts over those reported by staff in the pre-program year.

2. One full year after implementing pilot programs for disruptive pupils, participating schools will show a 20 percent decrease in suspensions and expulsions over those in the pre-program year as measured by administrative records.

ISSUE 7: ESTABLISHING AND CONTINUING PROGRAMS FOR PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE IN THE SCHOOLS.

BACKGROUND:

The use of drugs and alcohol by students is a serious problem which has affected academic performance and behavior. The problem of substance abuse is not only increasing but it is extending down to younger age groups. Findings from a 1981 Department of Law and Public Safety survey of New Jersey high school students portray the seriousness of this problem:

- 91.2 percent of the students surveyed reported alcohol use at some time (87.6 percent reported use in the previous year, and 70 percent reported use in the previous month);
- 67.3 percent of the students surveyed reported illicit drug use at some time in their lives;
- 30.6 percent of all students surveyed reported using drugs at least once during school hours, while 16.5 percent reported using alcohol at least once during school hours; and
- Marijuana was the illicit drug used most often, with 61.4 percent of the students surveyed reporting use at some time (51.8 percent in the previous year, and 36.1 percent in the previous month).

OBJECTIVE:

To reduce the number of incidents of student anti-social behavior due to psycho-active substances by 25 percent after one full year of implementing new policies, procedures, and programs as compared with the pre-program year.

ACTIVITIES:

The Department will make already existing information available to schools and will provide support for district development of policies and procedures in the area of substance abuse prevention and intervention. By September 1985, the department expects that at least fifteen districts will have implemented new policies, procedures, and programs designed to address the problem of student substance abuse.

Toward this end, a planning committee of the Department of Education and the Department of Health is conducting an inventory of existing resources. This group will also identify substance abuse programs that have proven effective elsewhere. These model programs will then be shared with districts through the RCSUs. Additional activities will include: 1) regional forums through RCSUs to make districts more aware of issues arising from the problem of student substance abuse, 2) staff training through RCSUs that will provide district personnel with information and techniques for dealing with substance abuse problems in their schools, 3) the development of a desk reference manual to serve as a guide and resource directory for educators who are developing substance abuse-related policies, procedures, and programs, and 4) a review of statute and code to assure that requirements and guidelines for substance abuse policies and procedures are provided in a complete and coherent fashion.

Reducing dysfunctional behavior related to substance abuse is an expected result of district implementation of its policies, procedures and program. The strategies actually implemented will vary from district to district. However, once implementation is verified through a standardized measure (Level of Use Scale), measuring changes in student behavior can begin.

EVALUATION:

By the end of the first year of program implementation, as measured by the Level of Use Scale, staff reports of student behavior problems related to substance abuse will decrease 25 percent as compared to the pre-program year.

ISSUE 8: ENABLING YOUNG DROPOUTS TO EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

BACKGROUND:

Approximately one out of every three adults in New Jersey does not have a high school diploma. Each year between 18,000 and 20,000 young adults drop out of high school and most of them live in urban centers. According to the 1980 federal census data, in New Jersey over 56,000 16 to 19-year-old persons who did not have a high school diploma were not enrolled in school. It is expected that the increase in the high school graduation standards will significantly increase the number of dropouts in the urban centers.

OBJECTIVE:

To enroll 1,000 dropouts from urban schools in model educational programs from which 60 percent graduate and 50 percent of these graduates secure employment.

ACTIVITIES:

The department's Division of Adult Education will encourage urban districts to develop outreach programs aimed at young dropouts. A total of $300,000 in competitive grants will be awarded to develop proposals for the provision of specalized training and supportive services for dropouts. The proposals will be judged in terms of already identified strategies for assisting dropouts to complete high school and to secure employment. At least three models will be selected for funding and implementation in five locations. In addition, special project grants under the federal Adult Education Act will be used to stimulate innovative approaches to the resolution of educational and employment problems faced by dropouts. The focus of these special projects will be on linking skills and high school completion instruction to job training and employment.

Finally, the division will focus on developing joint agreements between private industry councils and local adult education programs in five urban districts in order to coordinate training services to assist dropouts. Such agreements will make possible the merging of public and private employability training with education resources and result in efficient and coordinated intake, training and job placement networks for the undereducated 16 to 24 age group. The merging of resources will ensure the availability of job training for those dropouts who need this service prior to job placements.

EVALUATION:

By June 1986, 1,000 dropouts from urban schools will have enrolled in five adult education programs from which 60 percent will earn a high school diploma as measured by GED or adult high school completions. Fifty (50) percent of these graduates will be placed in a job as measured by Division of Adult Education follow-up records.

ISSUE 9: FOSTERING COMPUTER LITERACY AND EXPANDING INSTRUCTIONAL USES OF COMPUTERS.

BACKGROUND:

Recommendations by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth and other educational study commissions all point to a critical need for leadership and guidance related to instructional uses of computers and emerging technologies. This need is underscored by frequent requests to the department from school districts for technical assistance related to computer literacy programs, instructional uses of computers, and selection criteria for computer hardware and software. Districts also have identified as a critical need in-service training in educational computer use. The question of equal educational opportunity must also be addressed, given the disparity in computer access and instruction between some urban and non-urban districts.

OBJECTIVE:

To increase urban students' access to computers by improving the student-computer ratio in urban districts by 20 percent between 1983-84 and 1984-85.

ACTIVITIES:

The department will publicize a series of model district programs with at least two successful district computer applications in each academic subject area for elementary and secondary students. Particular emphasis will be placed on the use of computers in urban schools.

Periodic publication updates and a quarterly department newsletter will feature model district programs related to instructional uses of computers. The department will publish a computer resource guide identifying successful models for hardware and software evaluation and selection.

The department, in conjunction with the New Jersey School Boards Association and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, is planning to provide the services of the Education Products Information Exchange (EPIE) regarding educational uses of computers to all districts. EPIE, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Consumers Union, offers comprehensive, objective reviews of educational software and computer hardware. As part of EPIE's services, all districts are scheduled to have access to the CompuServe data base, which features educational research and development information and provides the department and districts with an electronic mail/bulletin board communications capability.

Through a special state allocation, the department will provide three computer training and demonstration centers, each to contain at least 12 microcomputers and an educational software library for use by local district personnel. The computers will be located in regional curriculum services units. To meet district staff inservice needs in computer education, the computer training and demonstration centers will conduct a series of workshops focusing on a variety of identified training needs including computer awareness, computer literacy, computer applications (administrative and instructional), and hardware and software evaluation. By January 1986, at

least 5 percent of certificated district staff in the state will participate in in-service training at the computer centers. Of this group, at least 50 percent will be from urban districts.

EVALUATION:

Student access to computers in urban districts will increase by 20 percent between 1983-84 and 1985-86 as measured by Department of Education surveys.

IV. THE CONCENTRATED INITIATIVE - OPERATION SCHOOL RENEWAL

Description

This section describes the State Department of Education's plan for initiating a concentrated effort to improve the quality of education in three selected urban school districts over a three year period. This concentrated effort is called Operation School Renewal.

Operation School Renewal, although initially restricted to three districts, must be comprehensive in its approach within that framework. Its objectives, therefore, reflect an effort to deal directly with a number of the problem areas identified by the State Department of Education's Urban Education Advisory Committee as symptomatic of urban districts (e.g., standards of achievement, disruptive students, quality of leadership). These objectives also represent a firm commitment by the department to reach toward the achievement of measurable though difficult goals.

Operation School Renewal will be expanded to include additional districts on a cyclical basis. The first cycle of the concentrated initiative will be implemented during school years 1984-1985 to 1986-1987. Additional urban districts will be selected for the second cycle scheduled to begin in the 1987-1988 school year. Other urban districts will be cycled into the concentrated initiative in each subsequent year.

Selection of Districts

A Selection Advisory Committee will be constituted. This group will include representatives of the Urban Education Advisory Committee, New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Education Association, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers, Research for Better Schools, the State Education Department and corporate leaders. It should have 10-12 members. The committee's function is to determine which districts best meet the criteria for selection and to recommend three districts to the Commissioner of Education for approval.

Criteria for selection will include baseline data regarding district need (e.g., attendance, academic achievement, dropout/suspension rates, violence and vandalism data, drug and alcohol abuse data). Also of importance will be district commitment and capacity as reflected in the district's self-nomination proposal. A third basis for selection will be additional information and insight resulting from the Selection Advisory Committee's visitations with school board members, administrators, key staff, parents and other community representatives and, where appropriate, municipal authorities.

A significant factor in the selection process will be the district's written commitment to:

1. participate fully in the project for a minimum of three years;

2. provide a full-time position for a three year period to support the project in that district. (The person appointed to that position is considered a member of the School Renewal Team and as such must be approved annually by the Assistant Commissioner of Educational Programs.)

3. provide necessary space for Department of Education staff and consultants for specified periods of time;

4. provide selected Department of Education staff and consultants access to all student records;

5. provide a specially selected School Renewal Team access to schools, to students and to teachers over an extended time;

6. guarantee support for the project by the school board, district superintendent and the particular principals involved;

7. guarantee that board members, administrators, and teachers fully support their pupil discipline policy. [No district will be considered for participation that does not have a code of conduct and a formal pupil discipline policy.]

8. allow documentation and dissemination of the process and of the measurable results in each school involved.

Finally, all three districts chosen must want to participate. The school board president and the superintendent must be willing to sign a contractual agreement specifying the priority of the initiative in district policy and operation during the three year time span.

The School Rewewal Team

The selection and utilization of a special state resource team is an integral part of the concentrated initiative. Primary responsibility for supporting the target districts in this project will be vested in this School Renewal Team (SRT).

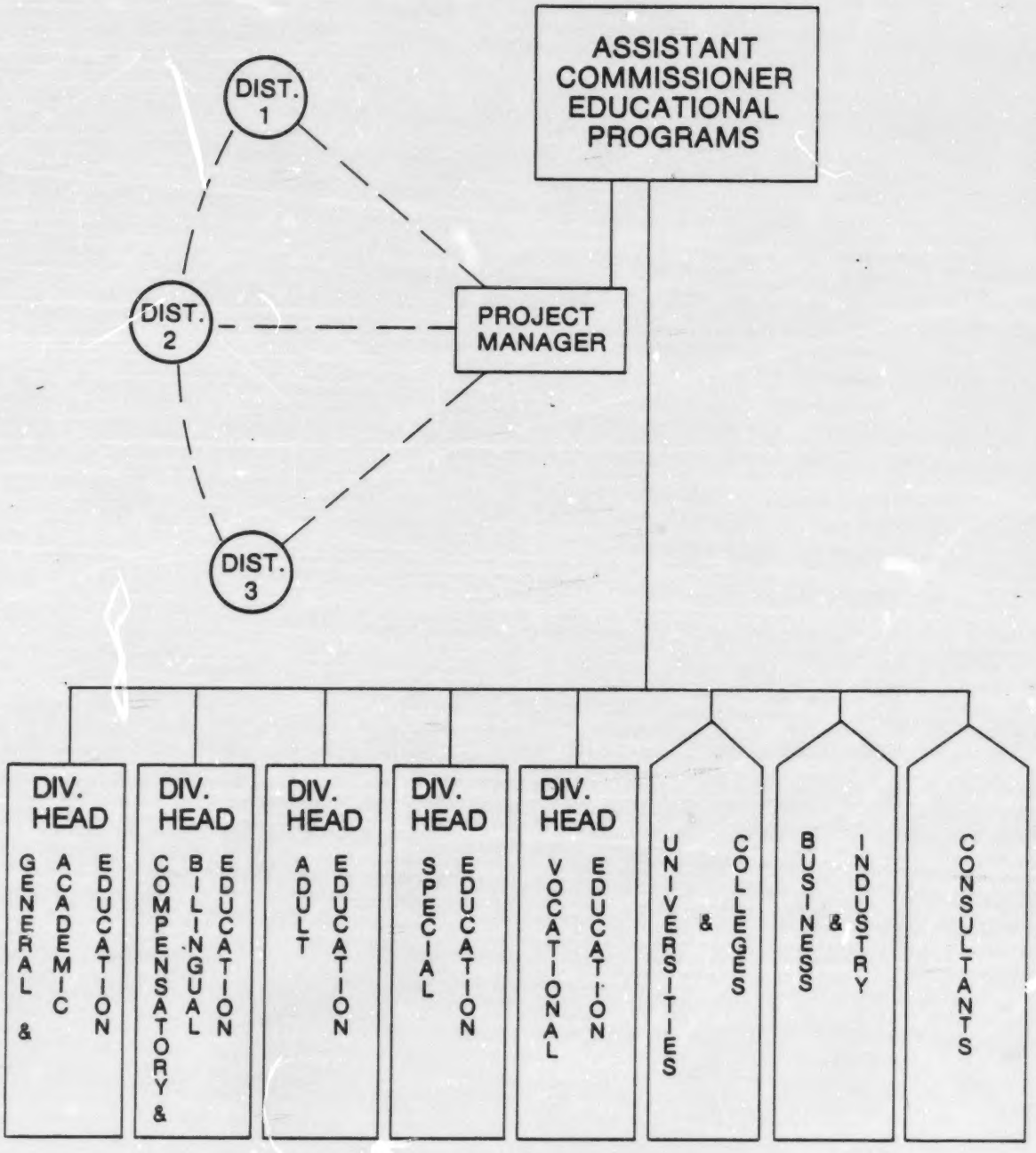
The School Renewal Team (SRT) will be headed by the Assistant Commissioner for Educational Programs, Dr. Arnold Webb. He will be directly responsible for providing overall supervision and coordination of the effort during the first three year cycle. In addition to Dr. Webb, the team's core will consist of a full-time project manager, who will spend the major portion of his/her time in the target districts, and of the division heads from General Academic Education K-12, Adult Education, Vocational Education, Special Education and Compensatory and Bilingual Education.

The SRT will also include a flexible cadre of department staff, higher education faculty, business and industry personnel and other experts. Their expertise will include the areas of research and evaluation, curriculum and instruction, and management. They will provide service and support to all three districts in the project. The School Renewal Team will be enhanced, as necessary, by outside consultants and, where appropriate, by graduate students.

Table 1 illustrates the structure and organization of the School Renewal Team.

TABLE 1

SCHOOL RENEWAL TEAM



Working collaboratively with local educational leaders, members of the School Renewal Team will design a comprehensive three-year action plan for addressing the five specific objectives of the concentrated initiative in each of the three target districts. This approach will allow the talents and backgrounds of a multidisciplinary team to be utilized in the planning process. Of particular importance will be the direct involvement of district educational leaders in the shaping of the initiative for their schools. Thus, the plan for change and for lasting improvement will be customized to reflect the unique needs and circumstances of the district and schools involved in the concentrated initiative.

In addition to designing a long-range school renewal plan, the department's team will assist the district (local project administrator, building principals, and lead staff) in implementing the activities detailed in the plan. Such assistance will include designing and conducting needs assessments, conducting or facilitating leadership and staff training, identifying and securing external resources, involving parents and community members, and developing programs (e.g. alternatives for disruptive youth, attendance improvement, writing instruction, computer literacy, etc.).

The School Renewal Team will work on site in the three districts on a flexible basis. Participating districts will provide accommodations for the team members as needed. When not working directly in the district, the School Renewal Team may use the regional curriculum service units (RCSUs) as a home base. By fostering communication between the School Renewal Team and RCSUs, the concentrated urban initiative can be better coordinated with the department's curriculum delivery system.

The School Renewal Team will utilize as needed the expertise of other Department of Education units such as Finance, Facilities, Information Resource Management, Data Processing, and Public Information. Where appropriate, the department will work with other state departments (Law and Public Safety, Human Services, Health, Public Advocate, etc.) to help target districts implement complex improvement strategies which cut across a number of public domains.

The team will have an array of resources upon which it can draw to assist the pilot districts. These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Chapter 2 discretionary funds for staff training and other project activities.

2. Special grants from discretionary funds of vocational, special education, compensatory, bilingual, and adult education.

3. Matching funds from private foundations for support and dissemination of the concentrated initiative.

4. Training fellowships and management consultants provided by the corporate sector.

5. A special state allocation of $1 million for particular projects in attendance and alternative programs for disruptive youth.

6. A special state allocation of $2 million for computer literacy programs.

In summary, the School Renewal Team is the cornerstone of the department's concentrated urban initiative. At times the team will be a catalyst for change and at other times a participant in the process. However, ultimate responsibility for school renewal belongs to the local district. The team is designed to support the efforts of urban educators to improve teaching and learning in their schools.

Timetable

March '84	-	Complete process of choosing Selection Advisory Committee members.
March '84	-	Selection Advisory Committee meets to review procedures.
April'84	-	Information regarding initiative and selection process sent to districts.
April '84	-	Selection Advisory Committee reviews submissions from districts.
April-May '84	-	Selection Advisory Committee visits districts under final consideration.
May 30, '84 -	-	Selection Advisory Committee submits final recommendations to Commissioner.
June '84	-	Commissioner announces three districts selected.
July-August '84	-	School Renewal Team meets with the three participating districts for preliminary planning.
September-December '84	-	Intensive collaborative planning period with School Renewal Team and local district/community personnel.
January '85	-	Final preparation for implementation.
February ' 85	-	Implementation begins.

Statement of Objectives

This segment presents: a statement of five major objectives for the three participating districts; the identification of proposed activities intended to meet the objectives; examples of program models found to be successful in addressing the problems posed by the objectives; and the evaluative measures that will be used to assess progress toward the objectives. In short, meeting these objectives is seen as the foundation for continuing efforts toward higher levels of educational quality and excellence in urban education.

OBJECTIVE 1:

TO IMPROVE PUPIL ATTENDANCE IN EACH PROJECT SCHOOL TO THE STATEWIDE AVERAGE OF 92 PERCENT.

ACTIVITIES:

Each district will develop and implement an extensive and comprehensive pupil attendance plan. Several programs have been successful in this regard: Counselor-teacher advising teams utilized in the Wisconsin Design for the Improvement of Secondary Education developed by the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research and Development, University of Wisconsin; Student-Teams Learning, a class organizational and instructional intervention model developed by the Johns Hopkins University Center for the Study of the Social Organization of Schools. These programs have significantly improved student attendance when applied according to the developers' recommendations.

Each district will develop and implement a plan to involve parents in improving their children's attendance at school. PROJECT STAY, an approach to decreasing student dropouts and increasing student attendance, developed by the St. Louis Public Schools, utilized a combination of counselor-teacher advisors and a cadre of parents who contacted and counseled other parents regarding student attendance. Significant gains in student attendance resulted. In another program, PROJECT EXCEL, agreements signed by parents to have their children at school each day and to insist that they completed homework assignments were found to be an effective means for involving parents in improving their childrens' attendance. Under the Cincinnati School Improvement Program, students shared the responsibility for contacting two to four of their peers to encourage school attendance.

Proportionate to their size and degree of need three urban districts, as part of Operation School Renewal, will receive special funding to develop and implement a customized attendance improvement program for the participating schools in their districts. In some urban secondary schools truancy is rampant and the average rate of daily attendance is 20 percent or more below the state average of 92 percent. At a time when the state is basing certification of districts in part on pupil attendance and performance, communities need to assure the regular attendance of children at school. The department will award special grants to districts engaged in the concentrated urban initiative to institute an aggressive campaign to bring older youth and adolescents back into the classroom on a consistent basis.

Examples of activities which could be part of these efforts are: developing an automated telephone message system to contact parents whenever a student is absent; providing parents with training opportunities and support groups; hiring a special attendance coordinator to follow-up and to counsel truants; developing a district wide attendance campaign featuring parent-school attendance agreements; and acquiring vehicles that can be used as part of a broad based municipal effort to return truants to schools.

EVALUATION:

By 1986-87, average daily attendance (ADA) in each participating school's will equal the state's ADA.

OBJECTIVE 2:

TO RAISE PUPIL PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS, READING, AND WRITING TO STATE STANDARDS.

ACTIVITIES:

Project schools will receive a compendium of successful curriculum and instructional models in reading, mathematics and writing. These models will be identified by appropriate divisions of the Department of Education. There are a number of approaches that have proven successful in improving student performance in the basic skills.

The Comprehensive School Mathematics Programs (CSMP), a nationally validated effort for kindergarten to grade six, has been used successfully by the Detroit Public Schools to improve student performance. A companion program for middle grades, The Teaching of Problem Solving Skills (TOPS), has also been successful. In both programs the mathematics content utilizes symbolic languages, introduces generic skills used throughout a students' school career, and is not dependent on reading skills. Another example is the approach to teaching basic computation and algebra skills developed by Charles Pine of Rutgers University. This model will be pilot tested in a number of New Jersey school districts, during 1984-85.

David Pearson, of the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, has designed instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension skills more effectively. Teachers model practices used by fluent readers and guide low-achieving students through a step-by-step process that has demonstrated significant reading improvement. Hal Herber, Syracuse University, Isabel Beck, University of Pittsburgh, and Delores Durkin, University of Illinois have all tested approaches to reading that have demonstrated successful changes in student performance. It is important to note that these approaches are recommended as supplemental to basal reading programs. Laura Roeler, Michigan State University and Jean Osborn, University of Illinois have designed approaches for using basal readers more effectively. A combination of the best of these approaches has the promise of producing reading improvement for low-performing students.

A variety of writing projects have proven successful. Most emphasize improved instruction and require systematic teacher in-service. The Florrissant, Missouri Writing Project, a nationally validated effort, has demonstrated effective results, as have several New Jersey writing projects (e.g., Project Read-Write and Project W.R.I.T.E.). Underlying successful outcomes in writing are practices that increase students' opportunities to write in all content areas on a regular basis. The above projects address such underlying practices.

All of the successful instructional and curriculum models that have been effective in raising student achievement include an accompanying staff training component. Therefore, each district should plan to provide release time for teachers to enhance their instructional and classroom management skills. In addition, supervisors charged with providing leadership in the implementation of any model must be familiar with its content.

Districts will develop plans and implementation strategies to install instructional models as well as to monitor continuously the progress of implementation. Special attention will be given to the adoption and implementation of writing instructional programs in each school with accompanying teacher inservice. Evaluation staff of the Department of Education and external evaluation consultants through the School Renewal Team will assist schools to evaluate the instructional and curriculum models and the related staff training.

EVALUATION:

By 1986-87, the percentage of 3rd and 6th grade students passing the locally selected and administered norm referenced or criterion referenced tests and the percentage of 9th grade students passing the state high school graduation test will be increased to 75 percent or the state average (whichever is lower).

OBJECTIVE 3:

TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BUILDING PRINCIPALS IN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.

ACTIVITIES:

Each principal will be trained in the "Achievement Directed Leadership" program. Principals in selected schools will also have the opportunity to participate in appropriate corporate management training programs. Along with their instructional staffs, principals will participate in the training that accompanies the curriculum and instructional models selected for use in their schools. To provide additional support for participating principals, a principals' network will be established.

Principals from the participating schools will be brought together in formal sessions to study and to discuss the nature and function of educational leadership. Emphasis will be upon the practical as well as the theoretical with a particular focus on successful programs in urban settings. Thus, the effective schools research can be studied, adapted and applied by principals to their individual buildings.

A centrally located school or college of education might well be the prime site for this project. College facilities could be used to provide the principals' groups with the results of current research in leadership training. Special consultants from other institutions and from business and industry will be brought in to work with the group and to share experiences.

The personal growth of principals in programs such as the one described above can be quite remarkable in a relatively short period of time. A principal more secure in himself/herself and more comfortable in the role of leader can have a profound positive effect upon an entire school.

EVALUATION:

By June 1986, 80 percent of the principals will demonstrate statistically significant improvement over 1984 measures of their performance and leadership behavior as measured by faculty reponses on the following instruments:

- o Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire
- o Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire
- o A validated questionnaire on principal's leadership
- o School Climate Inventory.

OBJECTIVE 4:

TO REDUCE THE REPORTED INCIDENCE OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OF PUPILS BY 40 PERCENT.

ACTIVITIES:

Each project school will review, and if necessary revise, its code of conduct for pupils and communicate it to students and parents. Principals will receive training on the appropriate application and monitoring required to enforce the code of conduct and appropriate conditions for suspensions and expulsions.

All staff will be trained regarding strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Staff will be trained in classroom management techniques that reduce the incidence of adult behaviors found to correlate highly with the incidence of disruptive student behaviors (e.g., negative feedback, sarcasm, ignoring particular students, and inequitable response opportunities). (Lyn Moran, "Some Are More Equal Than Others?", What's Noteworthy, McRel: Denver, Colordo, 1981.)

Project schools will work with the School Renewal Team in the development of alternative education programs for chronically disruptive students. A special state allocation of $600,000 will be made available through the School Renewal Team to implement programs in the three participating districts for pupils in grades 7 to 12.

One approach involves the removal of chronically disruptive adolescents from the regular program. Disruptive pupils will be assigned to an alternative high school program. Students and parents will receive orientation and counseling regarding pupil selection and assignment to the alternative education program, including conditions for returning to the regular school program. The alternative program will function as a mini-organization within the secondary school's organizational framework.

Each alternative program will operate twelve months a year on a very flexible basis, including evenings and weekends. Emphasis will be on developing a close-knit community in which youth experience the structure and support necessary to develop self-discipline. The alternative school staff will design an academic, training, and personal development plan for each pupil. Pupils and parents will be actively involved in this process. The alternative program will combine ongoing professional and peer counseling, vocational training, work experience, low pupil/teacher ratios, individual and small group instruction, adult role models, and an array of needed support services.

EVALUATION:

Disruptive behavior referrals based on official school records will be reduced by 40 percent between 1983-84 and 1985-86.

OBJECTIVE 5:

TO REDUCE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

ACTIVITIES:

Specific program area specialists from the department's Division of Vocational Education will work through the School Renewal Team with appropriate personnel from the three participating urban districts to increase the employment potential of students. Where appropriate, staff of the county offices and RCSUs will also assist. In addition, two vocational guidance and counseling staff members will work on a regular basis with appropriate local personnel to accomplish major program improvement activities.

The division will provide each project high school with a job placement counselor to serve students in need of a job and to conduct peer counseling sessions to encourage dropouts to return to school. A career resource center will also be provided that includes an assessment area available to all youth who are unemployed. In addition, a job developer will be funded to assist in matching potential employees with available jobs.

All cooperative vocational education applicants will be placed in the appropriate program (related class and job) based on a pre-vocational assessment series of tests and counseling sessions to determine their aptitudes, interests, and abilities in order to increase their chances of success in a given occupation. In addition, during 1984-85 all counselors in the districts will be provided with two weeks of training regarding vocational education programs from career awareness to apprenticeship programs. Finally, a pre-vocational assessment and career counseling program will be implemented for potential school dropouts to help them select appropriate vocational training.

Three pre-vocational program specialists will also be assigned to work on a regular basis with appropriate local district personnel. These specialists, with the assistance of county and RCSU staff and staff from the Vocational Education Resource Center, will help local planners to develop plans for implementing K-9 sequential career awareness/development programs. They will also arrange for training of local leaders and trainers and assist in arranging for local staff training. They will advise and assist in the implementation of the career awareness/development programs and provide technical assistance for local leaders.

In the occupational area, participating districts will be encouraged to establish an urban/industry school council and to conduct analyses of local occupational needs, entry level skills, and necessary classroom equipment. Department staff will train local staff to align existing programs in terms of area employment needs and to incorporate comprehensive basic skills instruction in existing curricula. Where necessary, schools will be provided with equipment to train students. Recruitment and job placement activities will be conducted. In addition, peer group programs will be

developed with business/industry representatives to establish successful role models for students. Finally, broad based in-service training will be offered for guidance counselors, administrators and appropriate teachers to better enable them to understand and counsel vocational students.

EVALUATION:

1. Between 1984-85 and 1986-87, the number of graduating seniors from participating schools who are placed in full-time jobs will increase by at least 10 percent as measured by annual follow-up studies.

2. Between 1984-85 and 1985-86, the number of students from participating schools placed in jobs through cooperative vocational education programs will increase by 20 percent as measured by the Division of Vocational Education's annual report to the federal government.

V. MONITORING

Monitoring of local school districts as required by the Public School Education Act of 1975 (Chapter 212) undergirds the two-pronged urban initiative. The New Jersey State Department of Education is responsible for assuring that the necessary elements are in place to "provide all children in New Jersey...the educational opportunity which will prepare them to function politically, economically and socially in a democratic society." This responsibility will be fulfilled via a revised monitoring manual and a new procedure for monitoring approved by the New Jersey State Board of Education in August 1983. The process focuses on ten essential elements for a thorough and efficient education and on the evaluation of those elements objectively and consistently throughout the state.

Monitoring will be the responsibility of the county offices of education. Under the supervision of the county superintendents, every school district in the state will be rigorously monitored within the next two years. Thereafter, however, the monitoring process will become considerably more selective. Districts which have demonstrated the necessary essential elements and have been certified will be reviewed only at five-year intervals under procedures set forth in the new monitoring manual.

Limiting the monitoring of districts that have been certified will not only free them from unnecessary paperwork but also will allow the department to direct its efforts and limited resources to assisting districts not granted certification. Such districts will focus their efforts on solving problems associated with noncertification.

The department's urban initiative reflects its commitment to urban schools. Rather than limit its responsibilities under Chapter 212 to documenting problems in urban schools via a purely regulatory process, the broad based and concentrated components represent the department's determination to work with urban educators and communities to resolve these problems.

The monitoring process is a key part of the state's renewed commitment to local planning for educational excellence. It is intended to provide public accountability at every level, while encouraging local responsibility for assuring that all children have the opportunity for a thorough and efficient education. As such, monitoring and the renewal of urban schools are closely related.

VI. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

Direct corporate and industry involvement is important to the urban initiative. Business leaders can signficantly affect the design and outcome of this long-range educational improvement program. A compelling reason exists for corporate leadership to invest time, energy, and resources in this educational improvement campaign. Simply stated, the primary clients of the state's public school system are New Jersey business and industry. Therefore, it is in their own best interests to assure that the educational system produces young adults with the knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to succeed in the market place.

Executives and their companies can help urban districts by providing management consultants to selected boards of education and central office administrators. Lay board members and professional educators would benefit greatly from the analytic and design skills of senior managers concerning such areas as budget development, finance, capital planning, comprehensive maintenance, contracting, insurance, personnel policies and programs, and training.

In the concentrated initiative within three urban districts, the impact of business and industry can be most visible and most effective. By participating in Operation School Renewal as a member of the School Renewal Team, state corporate leaders can bring their management expertise directly to bear on the design and implementation of the comprehensive improvement plans for three urban districts.

Specific examples of ways in which business and industry can most effectively be involved include:

- Providing senior level staff for varying amounts of time to assist districts with managerial, financial, and training areas.

- Opening up slots in corporate training programs for school middle and senior managers. School administrators would benefit from rigorous analysis of their leadership styles and managerial skills as part of a personal strengthening program.

- Designing specialized training appropriate for classroom teachers (e.g. planning, data management/processing, communications, interpersonal skills, time management, etc.).

- Hiring math, science, and technology teachers during summers or sabbatical periods. Business and industry would realize greater productivity from this infusion of mature, highly motivated workers. Teachers would learn first hand the latest developments in their fields and transmit this updated knowledge immediately to their pupils.

- Expanding work/study and employment opportunities for urban students who "buy into" the school/self improvement concept and are looking for the "pay offs" about which they may be skeptical. Some specific steps may include: establishing for each participating urban secondary school a guaranteed pool of part and full-time jobs and providing exceptionally gifted urban students with a close relationship with corporate career role models via internships.

- Contributing modern equipment and information resources to schools. District budgets for laboratory, data processing, telecommunications, industrial, and electronic equipment and information resources are chronically inadequate. Often equipment that may no longer be state-of-the-art and is therefore unusable to offices and factories could significantly upgrade that which is found in schools. In some cases, industry could donate subscriptions to computerized data banks or pay a one-time telephone charge for a computer hook-up or other large expense such as a microwave antenna.

- Developing instructional programs and fostering extracurricular activities which focus on entrepreneurship. Business and industry could use their telecommunication resources to involve hundreds of urban students in teleconferences on key aspects of American capitalism, interview strategies, job skills, employment opportunities, job shadowing, and live question and answer sessions. Corporate speakers bureaus could be expanded and targeted to youth. Participation in programs such as Junior Achievement could be expanded or started in urban centers. Weekend/summer leadership retreats for urban student leaders could be sponsored.

In short, business, as part of the Operation School Renewal, would enter into a convenant with selected schools and their students. In return for their investment in urban youth, business and industry will benefit from a more skilled, highly motivated and, hence, productive pool of candidates from which to select future employees.

The department is currently reseaching examples of successful business - education collaborative arrangements which can be adapted to meet the unique needs of districts participating in the urban initiative. The Houston Independent School District provides one example of how business can help improve the quality of education. In 1980, Houston expanded its Volunteers in Public Schools Program to include Business/School Partnerships, under which businesses "adopt" specific schools and aid them through tutoring, teaching assistance, and special projects. Businesses and schools together tailor their relationship to the needs of the school and the available resources of the company. Half the 88 partnerships in Houston schools involve business volunteers on a weekly basis. Though donations often follow the presence of a business in a school, <u>people</u>, <u>rather than donations</u>, are sought.

Success in the initial three districts will provide an impetus for the improvement of urban education throughout New Jersey. The Department of Education's urban initiative provides an unprecedented opportunity for executives from business and industry to have a direct impact upon the quality of education in New Jersey. In the initial phases, business and industry can be most helpful by providing staff resources to the effort. At later stages, the corporate sector may be asked to provide fiscal resources to augment the renewal effort. Throughout the initiative, these human and financial resources will play an important part in changing urban schools.

VII. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Although the prime purpose of the urban initiative is to improve education in New Jersey's cities, there are also significant research implications in the project. Therefore, prior to implementing the initiative, a consultant will be employed to develop an overall research design for the concentrated initiative. This design will specify the research questions to be answered as well as the related activities, timelines and evluative measures which will be used to study the implementation of Operation School Renewal in three pilot districts. Knowledge about how these urban schools improve and about how the department can best facilitate that improvement will ultimately benefit students throughout the state.

Among the research questions to be studied through the urban initiative is the crucial issue of how schools become more effective. The body of research that has become known cumulatively as the "Effective Schools Research" identified schools in which students from the lowest socioeconomic group achieved at the same standard as those in the highest group and then looked for the characteristics those schools shared (e.g., Lezotte, Brookover, Edmunds). Overall, this research represents a snapshot of what effective schools look like. The urban initiative will allow researchers to take a moving picture of the process a school undergoes in changing from less to more effective. It will allow the identification of those elements of effective schools that are the more powerful points for intervention.

The focus on the principal as leader is appropriate given the overwhelming evidence of his or her importance to the educational quality of a school. Thus, the varying ways effective principals play out their leadership skills will be documented, analyzed and shared.

Most research about effective schools and about the implementation of innovative programs has occurred on the elementary school level. Secondary schools are organizationally more complex and the goals for students are more varied than in elementary schools. The urban initiative acknowledges both academic and vocational goals for secondary students. Therefore, in the pilot secondary schools in Operation School Renewal the department will attempt to identify the characteristics of effective high schools and to explain how their organizational complexity can best be used to achieve effectiveness.

This concentrated initiative will also provide a research opportunity to explore the relationship between the school, the community, parents and employers in the target districts. Each district will relate differently to its various constituencies before, during and after, Operation School Renewal. Studying those different modes of relationships and the various ways they change could be a significant element in the research design for this project.

Working together, the School Renewal Team and the research design consultant will define and isolate a number of other areas in the plan that can yield significant research data. These data and the resultant insights gained will be shared periodically with interested parties during the life of the project.

VIII. SUMMARY

The urban initiative will have two major components: a broad based program addressing nine critical issues in urban districts across the state; and a concentrated program in three urban districts (Operation School Renewal). These two components complement the department's monitoring and certification efforts.

Implementation of the broad based program has already begun and the action plans and strategies for achieving its objectives are well underway. Staff from the department's central office, RCSUs and county offices are all involved in the broad component.

The concentrated urban initiative must involve districts willing to make their own commitment of energy and resources and in which the probability of measurable success is reasonably high. Staff from the department, colleges and universities, business and industry, and outside "experts" will all be involved for extended periods of time. Extensive planning must be done with the districts and schools involved and, if possible, with the support of the local community.

This initiative is one of major significance. It will not be easy to improve the quality of education in the state's urban areas. Commitment, tenacity, patience and follow through must be demonstrated by local districts and the Department of Education over a multi-year time frame in order to succeed.

The Urban initiative begins on a solid foundation. Excellence in education ranks high on the nation's agenda. America is renewing its commitment to education. In New Jersey the Governor has made educational quality a top priority. The Department of Education has reorganized to focus its energy and resources on helping local districts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the preceding pages, a plan to support the improvement of urban schools has been proposed. The easy steps have been taken. Now the challenging work begins.